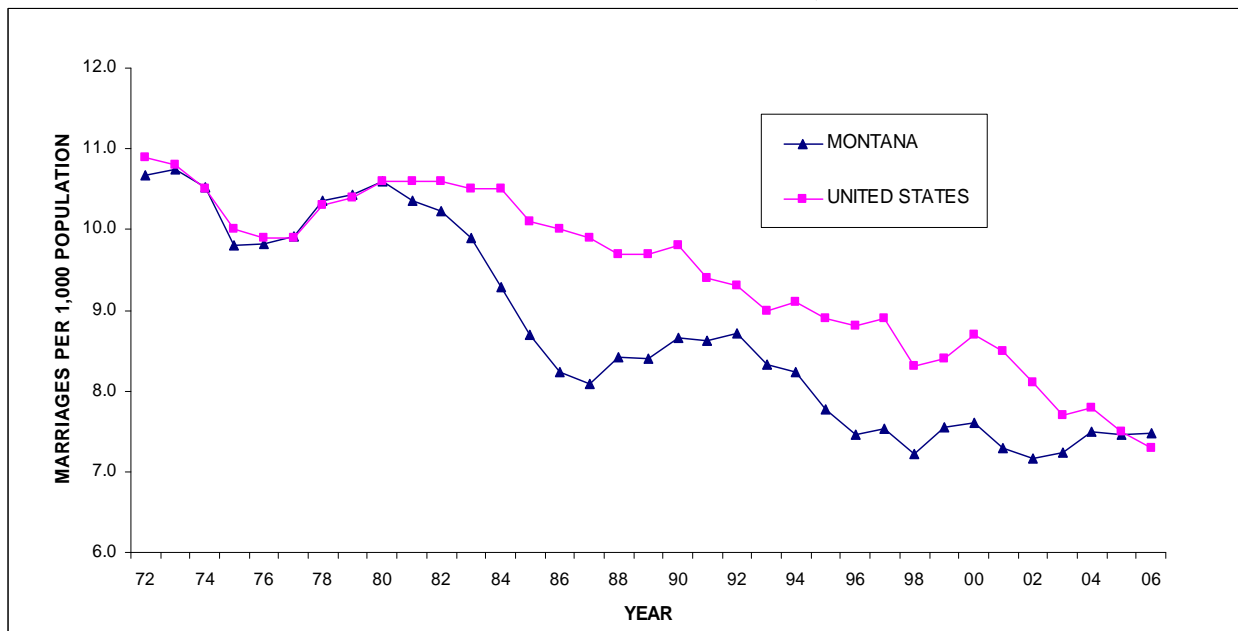


MARRIAGE

There were 7,055 marriages solemnized in Montana in 2006 and the rate per 1,000 population, 7.5, was a slight increase over the previous year's rate. Except for a brief resurgence in Montana's rate between 1988 and 1992, the trends in marriage rates for both Montana and the United States have been in long-term decline since 1980 (see **Figure 63**).

Figure 63

MARRIAGE RATES MONTANA AND THE UNITED STATES, 1972-2006*



* Data for the United States in 2006 and 2003 are preliminary.

Table M-1 shows the frequency of marriage by month in the year 2006. The summer and early fall months (June through September) have been the most popular times for marriage.

The ages of brides and grooms, by age groups and prior marital status, are shown in **Table M-2**. Nearly two-thirds of the brides (65.3%) and grooms (66.4%) married for the first time in 2005.

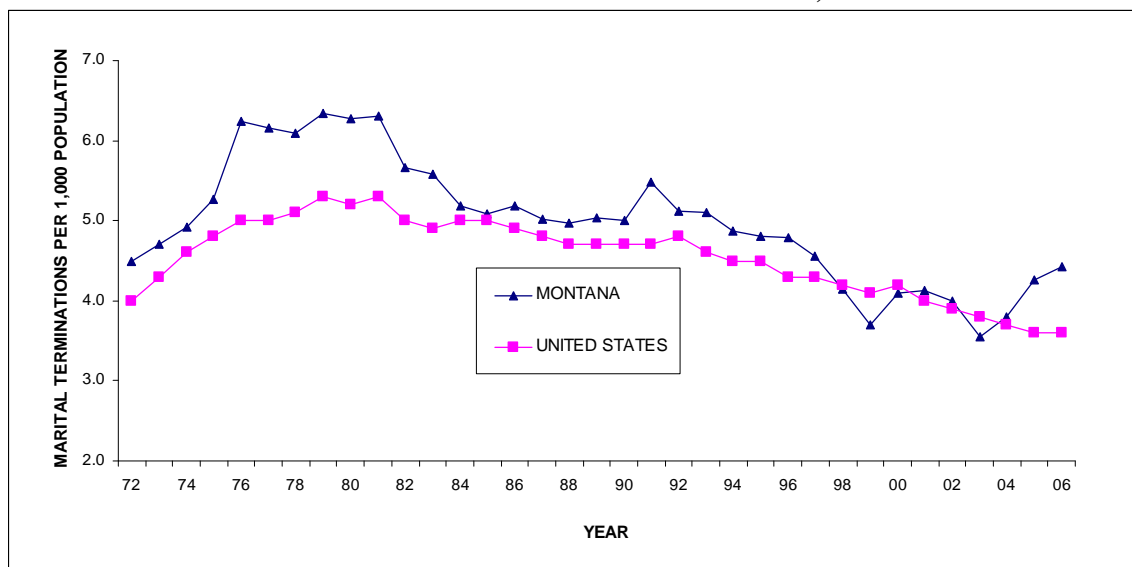
Just over half (53.4 %) of all marriages performed in Montana in 2006 were first marriages for both the bride and the groom. The frequency of such marriages is shown in **Table M-3** by age group of bride and groom. Median ages of brides and grooms for the previous dozen years are shown in **Table M-4**. The median age for first-time brides in 2006 was 24 years and that of first-time grooms was 26.

MARITAL TERMINATION

In October of 1998, the Judicial Case Management System (JCMS) assumed responsibility for the collection of marital termination records (marital dissolutions and invalid marriages). The records from 1998 through 2006 are not strictly comparable to those collected by the Office of Vital Statistics (OVS) in prior years. However, **Figure 64** shows that the trend in marital termination for Montana was roughly parallel to the national trend from 1970 through 1997, years in which data were collected by OVS, although the Montana rates were consistently higher up to the time JCMS assumed data collection. In the years after 1997, when JCMS has been collecting marital termination data, the Montana rate has dipped below, then exceeded, then again fell below, and in 2005 and 2006 again exceeded the U.S. marital termination rate.

Figure 64

MARITAL TERMINATION RATES MONTANA AND THE UNITED STATES, 1972-2006*



* Montana data were collected by the Montana Office of Vital Statistics (OVS) through September 1998 and by the Judicial Case Management System (JCMS) thereafter. Data collected by JCMS are not comparable to those collected by OVS and should be used with caution. Data for the United States in 2006 are provisional.

Montana's rate of marital termination per 1,000 population is shown in **Table S-5**. During the last 20 years that OVS collected the data, this rate decreased from a high of 6.5 in 1979 to 4.6 in 1997. As stated above, marital termination records for subsequent years—and rates calculated from those records—are not strictly comparable.